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842 826 hard it will be several years before they can have children. If both mates have hard blood they are condemned to childlessness, and nothing can help them, not even the cures mentioned above. It is significant that in this case they are not permitted [756] to turn to the shamans for help. These would definitely refuse to trouble the gods with such unclean affairs (ciachkire oruspe).

842 597 538 Sterility is not, however, something that should be punished with contempt. A childless family usually adopts a child from relatives. In the Ainu sagas and fairy tales it often happens that brave heroes who have always been successful in life and who have obtained a beautiful wife through great dangers and exertion, remain childless just because they were so powerful (we-nupuru). For children are ordinarily born only to the weaker (we cian) heroes of Ainu folklore.

841 834 589 Women who have no menstruation are recognized as sterile. These are the so-called "pure" who are designated by the Ainu as kiejsach machneku (that is, "bloodless"). These girls are strictly forbidden to have sexual intercourse with men, since they might by this find immediate death. Not long after my arrival among the Ainu /773/ a woman who had preserved her innocence till late in life, died. She had shamanic tendencies [756] and had for a long time been a shaman, from which can be deduced that she had a more tender and more receptive nervous system than the other girls. Among the Ainu can be found women with whom menstruation stops in youth. These women are condemned to complete sexual abstinence. A woman was pointed out to me who, though she lived together with an old man and was considered his wife, slept apart from him for the above mentioned reason. This had been going on for many years.

● 886 145 Menstruation. The Ainu know that when menstruation ceases that period of life begins for the woman when she is no longer capable of being fertilized. They were, however, unable to give me the average age at which this occurs. The Russian doctor N. Kirilov calculates this age to be 40 years.

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886 145 However, I believe that this figure is entirely arbitrary and based on the statements of only a few persons. My Ainu friends showed me a woman who must have been from 56 to 60 years old since her son was already 34. She had stopped menstruating scarcely three years before and was certainly not to be regarded as an exception, according to my acquaintances. From the statistical data that I collected among the population on the eastern shore of Sakhalin Island, it appears that 12 persons were [163] born to women of over 40 years of age. Of these women five bore children between the ages of 41 and 45, seven between the ages of 46 and 53. This constitutes 20 percent of all the women over 40 on the eastern shore of the island. It should be noted, however, that I only registered cases in which the children had remained alive, that is to say, the actual number of births is much greater. It may therefore be justly assumed that there are many women among the Ainu who menstruate beyond the age of 40 and whose menopause does not take place before 50.

841 145 Menstruation is not always regular among Ainu women. I knew for instance a young woman who later died of influenza at the age of 25, and who, according to her husband, lost so little blood that he would jokingly call her a man. This circumstance the young Ainu considered the cause of her sterility, and he sorrowfully confessed to me, that he would have to look for another wife in order to obtain offspring. She frequently complained of pains and said she had the feeling as though something moved in her entrails that caused these pains. Sometimes she also experienced difficulty in breathing at the same time.

It sometimes happens, though rather rarely, that Ainu women have their menstruation not every month, but every sixth week, which is called kiem o-utur tuima, that is, a great interruption of the blood.

Ordinarily menstruation lasts two to three days, and with some women it last four days. In the latter case it is always painful.